

# **HOUSING RESOURCES COMMISSION**

## **Quarterly Meeting**

**One Capitol Hill, Conference Room A**

**Providence, RI**

**M I N U T E S of October 19, 2007**

**Susan Baxter, Chair, called the meeting of the RI Housing Resources Commission to order at 8:53 am in Conference Room A, One Capitol Hill, Providence, RI. Present were:**

### **Commissioners & Designees:**

**Baxter, Susan-Chair**

**Aaronson, Roberta**

**Bodington, Susan**

**Fields, Barbara**

**Hannifan, Chris**

**Kiesel, Marilyn**

**Kravitz, Tom**

**McDonough, Robert**

**Nadeau, Gene**

**Novais, Ana**

**Sekeres, Bonnie**

**Tierney, Terence**

**Torrice, Joyce**

**Derwent Riding for Kevin Flynn**

**McAvoy, Gerald-Legal Counsel**

**Staff:**

**Shawcross, Noreen**

**De Lose Santos, Doris**

**Kue, Simon**

**Neirinckx, Ray**

**Price, Darlene**

**Tondra, Mike**

**Bergantino, Benny**

**Guest: Roland DiOrio**

**Pursuant to Chapter 46 of Title 42 General Laws of Rhode Island, notice of this meeting was posted at the State House and at RI Housing Resources Commission offices.**

**1. Approval of Minutes of July 27, 2007.**

**Susan Bodington made a motion to approve the minutes; Tom Kravitz seconded. Motion passed.**

**2. Report of the Chair**

**Susan Baxter welcomed Marilyn Kiesel who has been designated to represent the Rhode Island Association of Realtors. Reports from the Chair are integrated into Office reports.**

**3. FY 2009 Budget**

**A current draft of the HRC Program Budget was provided to the Commissioners. Personnel costs are included in the overall Division of Planning, Office of Housing and Community Development budget and therefore not reflected on the handout. The budget includes two proposed increases: 1) \$125,000 to provide shelter for single woman; and 2) \$175,000 to support an expansion of Housing First, Rhode Island. Concern was expressed about the lack of Lead funds; State budget constraints and mandated targets have resulted in the draft presented. A line item budget will be presented to the Commission when the budget becomes more certain.**

#### **4. Neighborhood Opportunities Program Resolution**

**Ray Neirinckx distributed a list of NOP project recommendations for Board consideration. Ray noted that Rockville Mill is the only project being done by a for-profit developer but it is being done in partnership with the non-profit arm of the Narragansett Housing Authority.**

**Bonnie Sekeres asked about funding levels. All were funded at the level requested. Rhode Island Housing recommends adjustments as required during the review of proposals. They will not bring anything that is not considered financially feasible to the HRC and will not put any agency at risk.**

**Limited discussion on the preservation of Indian Village was**

**prompted by a question from Barbara Fields. Susan Bodington and Chris Hannifan noted that NOP enabled the targeting of lower income households.**

**A resolution to approve funding recommendations at \$5.2 million was made by Bonnie Sekeres, seconded by Tom Kravitz. The amount for the Elmwood Foundation on the resolution was corrected from 1.8 million to 1.9 million in a motion by Derry Riding, seconded by Marilyn Kiesel.**

**The resolution passed. Chris Hannifan and Dennis Langley recused themselves.**

## **5. HRC role in State Housing Appeals Board Process**

**Recent developments/decisions have highlighted the need for a party to represent low/moderate income housing interests in the SHAB process. Rhode Island Housing's legal counsel has indicated RIH has no legal standing in such issues. Gerry McAvoy, HRC Legal Counsel, has also researched the issue. It is his opinion that the HRC does not have the direct authority to intervene in litigation before the SHAB. Discussion followed on what limited action/response could potentially be taken by the HRC. In response to questions, it was noted that the Commission could offer evidence and that Commissioners could testify as individuals, not on behalf of the Commission. The Commission could also submit an Amicus Curiae**

to Superior Court.

Some Commissioners had not received electronic copies. Noreen will make corrections on e-mail group to ensure that all are on it.

## **6. Reports of the Offices**

### **Legal Action with Regard to Lead Regulations**

Certain lead inspectors had their access to the database limited due to a failure of performance. This limitation was challenged; It has been determined the lawsuit would be settled with regulatory action if the party(ies) agreed not to litigate. The HRC will pay \$240 for plaintiffs' out of pocket expenses. Access to the database has been granted pending changes in the lead regulations. Meetings have been scheduled to discuss revision of the regulations. Recommendations will be brought back to the Board for action. HRC has improved coordination with the Department of Health on the 8-hour lead training. The copies of inspection reports that did come in prior to the legal action have been very helpful in reviewing issues of quality control that prompted the revision in regulations.

### **Healthy Kids Collaborative RFP Issues**

A Request for Proposals (RFP) was issued by the Health Kids Collaborative, funded by the Dupont agreement. Noreen explained

concerns related to the RFP. The RFP failed to reference the Housing Resources Commission and detailed requested tasks which are the statutory responsibility of the Department of Health and/or the HRC. The firewall prohibiting government funding should not prohibit coordination of work. Discussions continued on the recognition and support of the HRC.

Susan Bodington and Chris Hannifan noted that the review of proposals should include criteria that will evaluate the extent to which the proposal complements the work of the HRC implementation of the technical assistance center. Gene Nadeau cautioned against penalizing in scoring without people knowing the rules.

Terence Tierney noted that the A.G. recognizes the work of the Commission, but will not replace state funding. He said there are no final conclusions regarding the RFP. Notwithstanding concerns noted, the HRC will issue letters of commitment, relative to its functions, to those applicants who plan to work with the HRC.

Susan Bodington made a motion to request the RFP be extended and revised; Chris Hannifan seconded. Roberta Aaronson proposed a friendly amendment to the motion to request corrections in the RFP where it conflicts with assigned responsibilities/statutory requirements of the HRC/DOH.

There were clarifications noting that the work of the HRC is

**continuing regardless of the RFP, and that the terms of the RFP were not dictated by court order.**

**The motion, as amended, was approved.**

**The resolution will be forwarded to the Dept. of the Attorney General.**

## **Foreclosures**

**Ray Neirinckx discussed the growing number of calls related to foreclosures. HRC staff are concerned that in multi-family foreclosures, tenants are often displaced with little or no warning. RI led the region in % of foreclosures with 28% of loans considered high risk. Those seeking help have put great pressure on the HRC, RIH, the Housing Network, the Urban League and other agencies. Not only are people becoming homeless, but also neighborhoods are being impacted. Ray spends 50% of his time working on foreclosure cases.**

**Susan Bodington described RIH's work in terms of setting up a help center and coming up with a product to assist some people.**

## **Announcements**

**Susan Baxter has been awarded a Bank of America, Local Hero award. The Ceremony will take place on Monday, October 22nd and**

**all are invited.**

## **7. Public Comment Period**

**The next meeting is scheduled for January 18, 2008 at 8:30 am, Conference Room A, 2nd Floor, One Capitol Hill, Providence. Meeting adjourned at 10:31 a.m.**